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A great day for a hard ride!

Question of the day: Why does it feel so good, after 70 miles, to finally hit a solid climb? What is it about a climb that rejuvenates your spirits and somehow lightens the load on your legs? You would have been willing, for a good reason, to pack it in but now that you're on a real climb you feel like you can go on forever?
Last year, by mid-February Kevin and I had already done our first 100+ miler, the classic Woodside/Santa Cruz loop (112 miles from home in Redwood City). Things got off to a slow start this year though, mostly due to Kevin's various issues with his kidney, but early this week his stent was removed (finally!) and it was time to get back to basics.

Thank goodness the weather forecast was incorrect. I had been concerned about riding in a drizzly fog, but it was so nice out we needed (but did bring) neither leg warmers nor light jackets. It probably helped that we didn't hit the road until 11am, definitely a bit on the late side for a run to Santa Cruz, but not unusual at all for us (obviously, our ride in February last year must have started a lot earlier or we wouldn't have gotten back before dark!).

Old LaHonda was ridden at a moderate pace, ending up around 23 minutes for the climb after hanging back for a bit to chat briefly with one of our customers. Kevin followed the plan and rode at the same pace, rather than the sub-20 he would like to, but he's so short on miles it didn't seem like a good idea for him to burn too many matches too early in the ride. Yet it was such a nice day there was no way you could completely hold back, so even Haskins ended up being close to a 10-minute climb, a couple minutes faster than I thought likely.

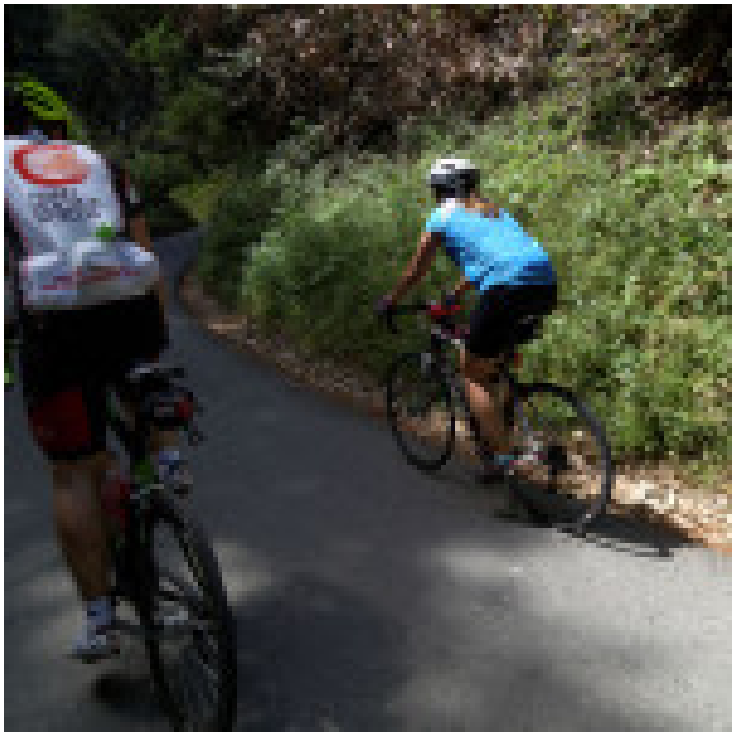
Lunch in Davenport

Thank goodness the prevailing winds held out! It wasn't a direct tailwind heading down the coast, but it was close. I'd already decided that, if we got to the coast and it was going to be a headwind into Santa Cruz, we'd be reversing course and doing a shorter ride. No need. We arrived for "lunch" at the Whale City Bakery in Davenport, downing a ham & cheese croissant, coke and a cookie for Kevin, raspberry muffin for me. That took care of us for the run south to Santa Cruz then up Highway 9 to Boulder Creek for the obligatory Mtn Dew stop before the long climb up to Skyline.

80 miles down, 32 to go, time for a cold drink and a hot-dog! Thank you, Mr. Mustard.

Skyline. We've grown to depend on Mr. Mustard's hot-dog stand on Skyline for drinks and... yeah, hot-dogs. Mile 80 in a long ride and a hot-dog actually goes down really well. But we were in Davenport past 2pm, and didn't leave Boulder Creek until 4:15, and Mr. Mustard leaves shortly after 5! Yikes. We had money for the coke machine at the Saratoga Gap fire station, but it's just not the same. Fortunately, once we got onto the real climb, the legs started working again and we actually got some Strava-worthy times, personal bests (for the past 4 or 5 years; I was certainly a lot faster back in the pre-pre-pre-Strava days) for both of us. Mr. Mustard hadn't packed up yet so we scored the usual... hot-dog and a drink!

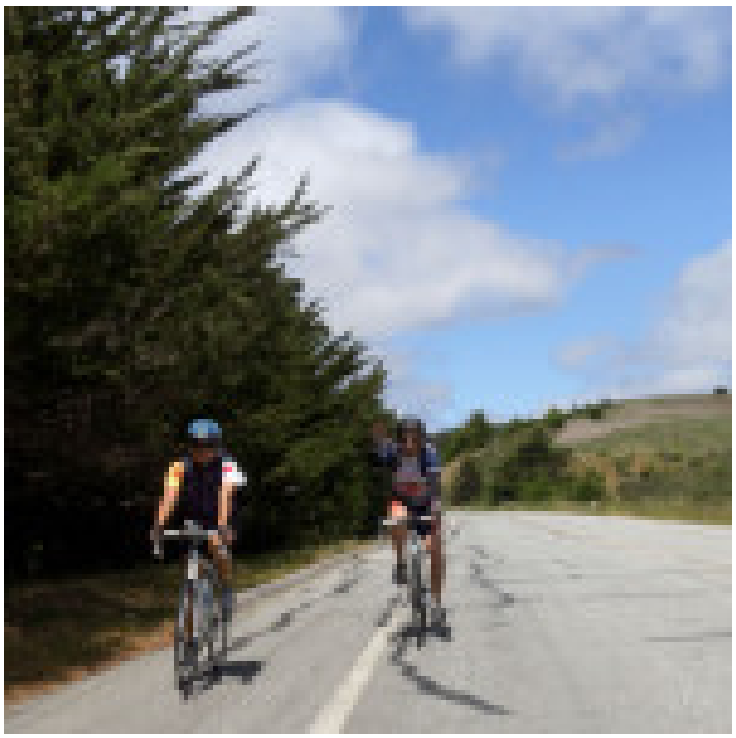
From there it was the easy north run on Skyline to Sky Londa, returning home not much past 6:30. Plenty of light, still nice out. Great ride.



Kevin passing one of our customers on Old LaHonda

She’s friendly, like all of our customers!

Passing the Red Barn on the way to LaHonda

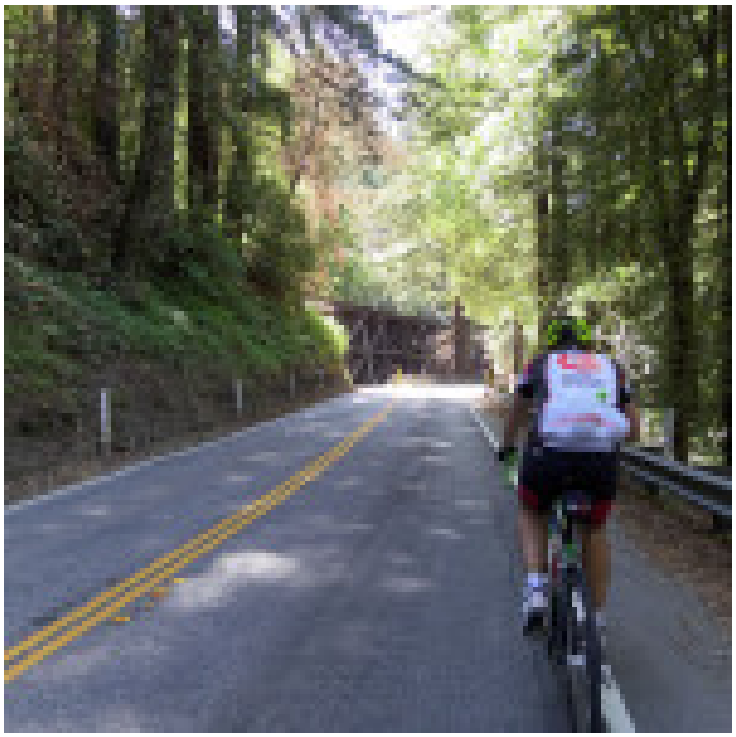


Friendly wave from cyclists we passed on Cloverdale Road

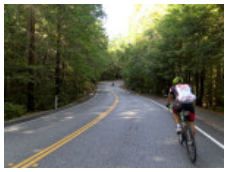
Cloverdale Road

More Cloverdale Road (or is it Gazos Creek here?)

You can see the spaceport in the distance, just to the right of Highway 1

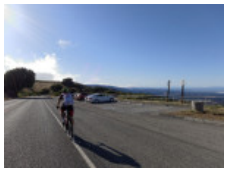


Train trestle on Highway 9 before Felton



Finally, the real climb begins!

Mr Mustard waiting for us at Saratoga Gap



Scenic outlook on Skyline

Skyline between Page Mill and Sky Londa

More Skyline